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(54) FORMATION OF TRANSITORY IMAGES BY INTAGLIO PRINTING

(71) We, AMERICAN BANK NOTE COMPANY, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, United States of America, of 70 Broad Street, New York, New York, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to printed matter, and especially to printed matter having imprints adapted to enable prevention or detection of fraud, i.e. counterfeits. In a more particular sense, the invention is directed to new and improved intaglio imprints suitable for use in security documents and the like, and to means and methods for producing such imprints.

Intaglio printing is widely employed for the production of security documents such as bonds, bank notes, stock certificates and other papers as to which it is desired to prevent counterfeiting or enable detection of counterfeits. An intaglio imprint is obtained by pressing a suitable recording medium, e.g. paper, against an engraved and inked plate so as to deform the medium into the ink-bearing engraved recesses of the plate. The resultant impression, constituting a pattern formed of spaced and raised inked lines and/or other pattern elements, is characterized by superior clarity and sharpness of appearance, and cannot readily be copied with sufficient fidelity to escape expert detection.

Especially as produced with the aid of modern photographic copying techniques, however, counterfeits of intaglio-printed documents may be adequately authentic in appearance to escape detection upon cursory inspection by inexperienced personnel; yet in many instances where detection of counterfeits is important, it is impracticable to subject documents to detailed or expert scrutiny. Therefore, in order to enhance the protection against counterfeits achieved by intaglio printing, it

would be desirable to provide means whereby relatively untrained persons could quickly and positively distinguish authentic intaglio-printed documents from photographic copies or like counterfeits. 50

Some alternative expedients heretofore proposed for prevention or detection of counterfeits have involved provision, on a substrate such as paper, of a transitory image, i.e. an image that can be made to appear or disappear upon performance of certain operations. Specifically, it has been proposed to provide a flat surface-printed pattern including an image which is formed of closely spaced parallel lines and is surrounded by a background of differently-oriented parallel lines or like shade so that the image is ordinarily difficult to distinguish from the background; for detection of the image, a screen bearing similar parallel lines is superimposed on the imprint in alignment with either the image lines or the background lines. It has also been proposed to print an image and surrounding background in different inks which are indistinguishable from each other in ordinary light but display a contrasting appearance when illuminated with light of particular colors. The production of transitory images by the use of lenticular screens, especially for purposes of amusement or artistic design, is well known. In addition, it has been proposed to impress an appropriately oriented pattern of embossed ridges on a substrate bearing a flat surface-printed pattern for production of decorative transitory visual effects when the superimposed patterns are viewed at an angle at which the embossed ridges partially obscure the printed pattern. 80

Expedients of the foregoing types, however, either present difficulties in fabrication e.g. owing to problems of maintaining precise register during successive printing and forming steps, or necessitate provision of auxiliary detecting devices such as special lights or screens. Even apart from these considerations, such expedients are not widely acceptable as 90

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substitutes for intaglio printing security papers, for a variety of reasons including the marked superiority in quality of appearance afforded by intaglio printing, and the strong and settled preference for intaglio printing in this field.

The present invention provides for an intaglio imprint incorporating, as a part of the imprint itself, a transitory image readily visually detectable by untrained personnel but incapable of being copied, or by exhibiting a transitory character, in a photographic or like reproduction of the imprint.

More specifically, the invention comprises an article suitable for use as a security document or the like, including the combination of a recording medium having an intaglio-printable surface and an intaglio imprint of spaced and raised inked pattern elements on the surface, wherein the imprint includes an image and a background each formed by pattern elements thereof, and wherein pattern elements in the image differ from pattern elements in the background for producing variation in contrast between the image and the background as the angle of view of the imprint varies in at least one plane normal to the surface, the image and background pattern elements being respectively so arranged that the image is substantially undetectable visually from one angle of view but appears in clear contrast to the background from another angle of view in the aforementioned plane. The term "angle of view", as used herein, refers to the angle between the imprint-bearing surface and the line of sight from the eye of a viewer to a point on the imprint being viewed.

In this connection, it may be explained that the inked pattern elements of an intaglio imprint are appreciably raised above the paper or other surface bearing the imprint; i.e. these elements have substantial depth, the term "depth" being used herein to designate the dimension of a intaglio pattern element in a direction transverse to the substrate surface, or in other words the height to which such element projects above adjacent unprinted portions of the surface. The depth of the intaglio pattern element will normally be constituted partly by the embossment of the surface and partly by the thickness of the ink on top of the embossment. For the purpose of the present invention it is important only that the pattern elements should have depth and the proportions of the depth constituted by the paper or other material and the ink are not critical. The term "raised inked pattern elements" is to be interpreted accordingly. Typical intaglio pattern elements include lines, dots and other shapes, the raised portions of such elements bearing ink. As one example, to which particular reference will be made herein for purposes of illustration, one known type of intaglio imprint is constituted of a large plurality of more or less parallel, spaced,

raised, inked lines cooperatively defining a visible pattern formed by variations in the width and/or curvature of the lines.

When an intaglio imprint of the type just described is seen from an acute angle of view in a plane perpendicular to the lines, it is found that the inked lines (being raised, as stated, above the substrate surface) at least partially occlude the spaces between them, with the result that the imprint may appear perceptibly more intense (i.e. darker when a dark intaglio ink is used, or lighter, when a light intaglio ink is used, on a contrasting background) than it does when seen from an angle of view normal to the substrate surface. The extent of this occlusion and resultant enhanced intensity is dependent on line depth, line spacing, and angle of view. In particular, for a given angle of view and line spacing, lines of greater depth will more completely occlude the intervening spaces and hence appear more intense (e.g. darker) than lines of lesser depth.

The present invention uses this three-dimensional or depth velocity of intaglio printing to produce transitory images. In specific embodiments, the invention employs intaglio pattern elements for the image that differ in depth from the intaglio pattern elements constituting the background of the imprint. Thus, one form of imprint in accordance with the invention may comprise an array of intaglio pattern elements within some groups of adjacent pattern elements (or portions of elements) are of enhanced depth constituting an image and the remainder of the elements are of lesser depth. In this case, the image thus formed is substantially undetectable visually when the imprint is viewed from a normal angle of view; but when seen from a sufficiently acute angle of view, in at least one plane perpendicular to the imprinted substrate surface, the image appears markedly more intense than the background and is therefore clearly perceptible, because the relatively deeper image-forming elements (or portions thereof) cooperatively appear more intense than the relatively less deep background-forming elements. Such an image, appearing only when the imprint is seen at an acute angle of view, is herein termed a latent image.

In another specific embodiment, the background portion of the imprint comprises an array of intaglio pattern elements and the image is formed of intaglio pattern elements of substantially lesser depth than the background-forming elements, the image-forming elements being interposed between elements of the background, so as to be occluded by the background-forming pattern elements when the imprint is seen at a sufficiently acute angle of view in at least one plane normal to the substrate surface. This image contrasts clearly with the background as seen from a normal angle of view, because the portions of the im-

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print having image-forming elements interposed between background elements appear substantially more intense (e.g. darker) than those portions of the imprint where the background elements are separated by unprinted spaces. However, as seen from a sufficiently acute angle of view in an appropriately oriented plane, the image disappears because the relatively deeper background elements completely occlude the image elements and there is no longer any contrast between different portions of the imprint. This image, visible from a normal angle of view but substantially disappearing at an acute angle of view, is herein termed a transient image.

It is also possible to provide imprints, including intaglio pattern elements, that exhibit transitory visual effects involving changes other than variation in intensity. For example, a surface-printed ground pattern in plural colors may be overprinted with inked intaglio pattern elements so aligned with the ground pattern as to selectively occlude a particular color or colors in the ground pattern when seen at a sufficiently acute angle of view in an appropriate direction. The imprint thus displays one color effect at a first (e.g. normal) angle of view, and a different color effect at a second (e.g. acute) angle of view.

In further embodiments, the image and background of the imprint of the invention are each formed by substantially parallel intaglio pattern elements (e.g. lines) with the lines or other elements of the image oriented at a substantial angle to the lines or other elements of the background. For example (referring to the use of lines), the background and image lines may have substantially the same width and spacing, so that as seen from a normal angle of view, the image is substantially indistinguishable from the background. If the imprint is seen from a sufficiently acute angle of view in a plane perpendicular to the background lines, the background portion of the imprint appears substantially more intense (e.g. darker) than it does when seen from a normal angle of view, owing to the effect of the background lines in partially occluding the intervening spaces; however, the image-forming lines (being oriented at an angle to the background lines) are more nearly aligned with the viewer's line of sight, and therefore even at such acute angle the spaces between adjacent image lines are less occluded than the spaces between adjacent background lines, with the result that the image then appears in substantial contrast to the relatively more intense background. A reverse effect is obtained at an acute angle of view in a plane perpendicular to the image lines; i.e. the image then appears markedly more intense than the background because the occluding effect of the image lines is greater than that of the background lines. Thus again, there is

provided a latent image, i.e. an image clearly distinguishable only at an acute angle of view. The greatest contrast is obtained when the image lines are perpendicular to background lines, but detectable images can be achieved at which lesser angles of divergence between the image and background lines, e.g. when the image lines diverge from the background line orientation by an angle as small as 30°.

Further in accordance with the invention, the lines or other pattern elements forming the background and image may cooperatively vary in width and/or curvature so as to define together a continuous pattern extending over the imprint and visible e.g. from a normal angle of view, without impairing the detectability of the transitory image. That is to say, since the provision of the transitory image involves depth properties of the intaglio imprint, a transitory image of substantially unimpaired quality may be obtained even though pattern elements vary in appearance as seen from a normal angle of view. Provision of an overall visible pattern aids in concealing a latent transitory image.

While the foregoing embodiments of the invention have been described as formed of lines, other types of intaglio pattern elements may be used in place of lines to produce like transitory image effects. For example, rows of dots may be used, the rows varying in height or orientation as described, to produce transitory images. Also, when the transitory images have been described as varying in contrast with the background depending on angle of view, similar effects may be obtained by varying the angle at which the imprint is illuminated utilizing the phenomenon that when the raised intaglio pattern elements are illuminated at an acute angle, they cast shadows which produce selective apparent darkening of areas of the imprint (especially when the imprinted substrate surface or ground color is light), depending on the relative depth of the pattern elements or their orientation in relation to the direction from which the imprint is illuminated.

The foregoing embodiments of the invention may be combined or modified in various ways to produce additional types of transitory visual effects. For example, in those embodiments wherein an image is formed by groups of adjacent pattern elements (or portions of pattern elements) having a greater depth than the surrounding background-forming pattern elements, plural images or changing images may be formed of pattern elements of respectively different depths (greater than the depth of the background elements); in an illustrative case, successive images or image portions appear as the angle of view is progressively reduced, the first-appearing images or image portions being those formed by the pattern elements of greatest depth. Continuous variation in depth of image-forming pattern ele-

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ments can produce an appearance of animation or an illusion of motion as the angle of view is progressively reduced. By appropriate orientation of image-forming pattern elements, plural images can be provided which appear only when seen in respectively different directions of view, i.e. at acute angles of view. Like effects can also be achieved by use of appropriate plural different (or progressively changing) orientations of pattern elements, i.e. in those embodiments wherein contrast between a background and latent image is achieved through use of pattern elements having different orientations.

In addition, it will be understood that the references herein to visual detection of images embrace very small images which may be detectable only under magnification, or images in imprints employing intaglio inks visible only under special types of illumination. Moreover, the images provided by the present invention may be detected by means other than the human eye, e.g. detecting devices sensitive to variations in intensity in reflected radiation from different portions of a surface. In a broad sense, then, references herein to visual detection will be understood to embrace such alternative analogous means of detection.

Although such variations and modifications are within the scope of the invention in its broader aspects, particular advantages of the invention in a specific sense reside in the provision of intaglio imprints, incorporating transitory (i.e. latent or transient) images, that can rapidly and positively be verified even by untrained personnel by the simple operation of progressively changing the angle of view of the imprint thereby to cause variation in contrast between image and background, the image being substantially undetectable visually at one angle of view but appearing in clear contrast to the background at another angle of view. To facilitate such inspection, the imprint may be so arranged that this variation in contrast occurs in correspondence with changing angle of view in a plane perpendicular to a straight edge of the paper or other substrate bearing the imprint. Thus the person inspecting the document will have it properly oriented for examination when he holds it with that edge facing him. Alternatively, the presence of the transitory image may be detected by varying the angle of appropriately oriented illumination on the imprint.

Since the transitory images of the present invention are achieved through utilization of the depth property of intaglio printing, they cannot be reproduced, at least as transitory images, on photographic or other two-dimensional copies of the imprint. Even a photocopy reproducing the imprint with perfect fidelity as seen from a normal angle of view will exhibit no perceptible change in contrast between the image and background portions of the

imprint with change in angle of view or angle of illumination, because the photographic copy is essentially a two-dimensional reproduction, lacking the physical property of depth that characterizes the original intaglio imprint. In other words, if the imprint bears a transient image, a photocopy made from a normal angle of view may discernibly reproduce the image, but the image will not disappear upon tilting the photocopy as it would in the original imprint. A latent image will be substantially undetectable visually in a photocopy taken from a normal angle of view and will not become more perceptible upon tilting of the photocopy.

As a further feature, the present invention in specific aspects affords provision of transitory images, facilitating rapid verification of documents and detection of photocopied or like counterfeits, that may readily and conveniently be produced without presenting any problem of register or other fabrication difficulty, owing to the fact that they may be incorporated in a single intaglio imprint, i.e. obtained by a single impression from a suitably engraved intaglio plate, although imprints embodying the invention may also be produced by plural successive impressions. Also, the invention affords transitory images requiring no special lighting or auxiliary detecting devices for detection, although again, as stated above, the invention may be embodied in forms adapted for use with particular illumination or detecting equipment. The images of the invention may be incorporated in the imprints on any kind of security paper or the like where intaglio printing is required or preferred.

The invention further comprises the provision of an intaglio plate for forming an imprint including one or more transitory images, such plate having engraved therein suitably arranged and dimensioned pattern elements for forming at least one image and background portions of an imprint as described above. In addition, the invention comprises the provision of a method of forming a transitory image by intaglio printing, comprising impressing on a suitably substrate surface (preferably as a single impression) background and image-forming intaglio pattern elements having the above-described features of arrangement and relative depth or orientation.

Further features of the invention will be apparent from the detailed description of examples thereof hereinbelow set forth, together with the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1 is a plan view (i.e. taken from a normal angle of view) of an intaglio imprint embodying the present invention in a particular form;

Fig. 2 is a somewhat diagrammatic view of the imprint of Fig. 1, illustrating the appearance of an intaglio image therein at an acute angle of view;

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Fig. 3 is an enlarged schematic sectional view taken along the line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is another enlarged schematic sectional view taken along the line 4—4 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is a plan view of another embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 6 is a plan view of an intaglio imprint similar to that of Fig. 5, but somewhat simplified, again embodying the invention;

Fig. 7 is an enlarged schematic perspective view taken as along the line 7—7 of Fig. 6;

Fig. 8 is a somewhat diagrammatic perspective view of the imprint of Fig. 6 illustrating the appearance of the image at an acute angle of view;

Fig. 9 is a plan view of yet another intaglio imprint embodying the invention;

Fig. 10 is an enlarged and somewhat schematic sectional view taken along the line 10—10 of Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 is a somewhat diagrammatic perspective view of the imprint of Fig. 9 illustrating the appearance of the image at an acute angle of view;

Fig. 12 is a plan view of another intaglio imprint embodying the invention and incorporating a transient image;

Fig. 13 is a somewhat diagrammatic perspective view of the imprint of Fig. 12 illustrating the disappearance of the transient image at an acute angle of view;

Fig. 14 is an enlarged schematic sectional view taken along the line 14—14 of Fig. 12;

Fig. 15 is an enlarged schematic sectional view taken along the line 15—15 of Fig. 12;

Fig. 15 is a somewhat diagrammatic plan view of an intaglio imprint illustrating the formation of plural latent images in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 17 is a greatly enlarged schematic plan view of an intaglio dot pattern illustrating the formation of plural transient images according to the invention;

Figs. 18 and 19 are enlarged diagrammatic section views of a row and column respectively of an intaglio dot pattern conforming to the schematic arrangement of Fig. 17; and

Fig. 20 is a somewhat diagrammatic plan view of an alternative intaglio dot pattern illustrating the formation of plural transient images according to the invention.

For purposes of illustration, the invention will be described as embodied in dark intaglio imprints on light paper wherein the intaglio pattern elements forming both the image and background portions of the imprint are substantially parallel spaced and raised inked intaglio lines. It will be understood, however, the the invention also embraces other combinations of ink and substrate or ground shade, e.g. a light intaglio ink on a dark background, or an ink distinguishable from the ground only under special conditions; and that the imprints of the invention may employ types and

arrangements (e.g. random arrays) of pattern elements other than parallel lines.

In all the embodiments now to be described, a useful range of frequencies for the pattern elements (as conventionally defined in terms of line frequency) is between 5 and 1,000 lines per inch, a range of between 100 and 200 lines per inch being convenient and presently preferred in many instances.

Figs. 1—4

The printed article of the invention in this embodiment includes an intaglio imprint 10 impressed on one surface of a sheet of paper 11 and incorporating a latent image 12 formed by intaglio line portions having greater depth than the line portions forming the background of the imprint.

As illustrated in Fig. 1, the imprint 10 consists of a large plurality of closely spaced intaglio lines 14 all identical in width (as seen from an angle of view normal to the surface of paper 11), spacing and orientation.

As viewed normally to the paper 11, then, the imprint has the appearance of a uniform array of lines, and the image 12 is substantially undetectable visually, the dotted lines in Fig. 1 being provided simply to show the locations of the image portions of the imprint and not to indicate visibility of the image from the angle of view normal to the surface of paper 11.

In the background portion 15 of the imprint, the lines 14 are of uniform depth. The lines passing through the image areas 12, however, include portions 14a within those image areas that have a substantially greater depth than the lines 14 outside the image areas. Each of the lines 14 that passes through one or more image areas 12 also passes through, and constitutes part of, the background of the imprint, i.e. outside the image areas; therefore (as best seen in Fig. 4) each such line includes portions 14b (outside the image areas) having the same depth as the other lines 14 in the background of the imprint, as well as portions 14a which are raised, i.e. of greater depth, coincident with the image areas and constituting the image. Stated in other words, and as hereinafter further described, the image 12 is constituted by the cooperative effect of locally raised portions 14a (i.e. portions of greater depth, as compared with the background lines) of a series of adjacent lines 14 within the imprint. In the illustrated imprint, these raised portions 14a are located within areas forming the capital letters ABCD, which letters comprise the image in the embodiment of Figs. 1—4.

As viewed in a direction perpendicular to the lines 14, e.g. along a line of sight contained within a plane X—X (Fig. 1) perpendicular to the imprinted surface of paper 11

and to the lines 14, the letters ABCD become increasingly visible as the angle of view L (Fig. 2) decreases in the plane $X-X$, i.e. from 90° . At a sufficiently acute angle of view, the image letters ABCD stand out in clear contrast to the background 15, as indicated in Fig. 2 which shows an image as it appears to an eye at the position 17 in Fig. 2, looking along a line of sight 18 (in plane $X-X$) that forms a very acute angle of view L with the plane of the imprinted surface of paper II. It is to be understood that the image 12 is shown in Fig. 2 as it would appear to an eye at the aforementioned position 17 and does as it would appear to a person looking at the imprint from the end edge 20 of the paper.

The increase in contrast between image and background portions of the imprint 10, perceived as the angle of view L become increasingly acute, may best be explained by reference to Fig. 3, which schematically illustrates the image and background line portions in transverse cross section. In this figure and in Figures 4, 7, 10, 15, 18 and 19 the pattern elements are shown as though constituted entirely by solid ink but in practice that will not normally be the case. Since the image and background line portions are of uniform width, there is little or no contrast between them when the imprint is viewed from a direction normal to the paper, i.e. with a 90° angle of view, and therefore the image is substantially indistinguishable from the background as thus normally viewed. However, owing to the depth of the lines 14 and 14a, when the imprint is viewed from an acute angle of view L, the dark-inked lines 14 and 14a partially occlude the unprinted spaces between the lines on the surface of the paper; hence there is a decrease in the amount of light or unprinted space visible between the lines, and a consequent darkening in the appearance of the imprint. Owing to the fact that the image-forming line portions 14a have a greater depth than the background-forming line portions, these image-forming line portions occlude relatively more of the adjacent unprinted spaces than do the background-forming line portions, at any given acute angle of view L in plane $X-X$. Therefore, as the angle of view L becomes progressively more acute, the image areas of the imprint become perceptibly darker in appearance than the background portions, enabling the image to be discerned visually (by contrast with the background) with increasing clarity. The broken line arrows in Fig. 3 illustrate this principle schematically. These arrows, representing a line of sight at a given acute angle of view L, show that, when the angle L is such that the image-forming line portions 14a virtually completely occlude the intervening unprinted spaces 22 between them, the background line portions still only partially occlude the intervening unprinted spaces; at such angle, then,

the image is much larger than the background and is very clearly visible.

An image formed as shown in Fig. 1 can readily be detected upon rapid inspection. Since the lines 14 are aligned with a long edge 24 of the paper, a viewer inspecting the paper holds it with that long edge facing him, and tilts it progressively (thus changing the angle of view) to see if the image appears. The image can also be detected by changing the angle at which the image is illuminated, e.g. in the plane $X-X$, since at acute angles of incidence of illumination the relatively deep image-forming line portions 14a will cast longer shadows than the relatively less deep background-forming line portions, and this difference in shadow length will again create a dark and light contrasting pattern defining the image.

The imprint 10 containing the latent transitory image 12 may be formed on the paper 11 by generally conventional intaglio printing in a single impression from an appropriately engraved plate. The plate is an engraved or etched intaglio plate, i.e. having formed therein by etching or engraving an array of parallel grooves corresponding to the intaglio lines to be printed and including grooves having a relatively greater depth in the portions which are to form the image of the imprint. This plate may be prepared by any suitable and e.g. conventional means as will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

Specifically, the engraved intaglio plate having the described grooves including locally deepened portions in the image-forming areas, is inked by applying to its surface an ink of a type suitable for intaglio printing and then wiping the surface clean, leaving the ink deposited in the grooves. Thereafter, a sheet of paper to be imprinted is pressed against the plate so as to be deformed into the grooves and to receive the ink therefrom, providing on the paper surface the above-described imprint of raised intaglio lines. In this way the image and background portions of the imprint are simultaneously printed on the paper in a single printing operation. The plate has the appearance of the imprint of Fig. 1, except that the plate has grooves where the imprint has ridges. Details of operating technique may as stated be generally conventional and need not be described, as they are well known to those skilled in the art. It will further be recognized that an imprint embodying the invention in the forms shown in Figs. 1-4 may include a substantially larger number of lines per unit length than is illustrated.

It will be appreciated that the concept of latent intaglio image formation by variation in pattern element depth, may be embodied in many different kinds of imprints. For example, imprints can be provided having plural images that appear successively as the angle of view is reduced in a given plane. Referring

to Figs. 1—4, if the image letters ABCD are respectively formed by line portions of decreasing depth, they will appear in succession as the angle of view is decreased in the plane X—X; the image letter A is formed by line portions of greatest depth will appear first, i.e. at the greatest angle of view, and will remain visible as the image letter B (formed by line portions of next greatest depth) appears with decrease in angle of view, and so forth, until at a sufficiently acute angle of view all four letters are visible. The same effect can be employed to progressively amend an image with decrease in angle of view; thus (as a simple illustration) if the pattern elements (line portions) forming the straight portion of the image letter B in Figs. 1—4 are deeper than the pattern elements forming the curved portions of that letter, the image will appear as the letter I or numeral 1 at a first acute angle of view in plane X—X, and change to the letter B upon decrease in angle of view.

Again, plural images may be formed which respectively appear only when the imprint is viewed (at an acute angle) from different directions. As a simple illustration, if in Fig. 1 lines including portions of enhanced depth forming the image letters C and D are oriented at an angle (e.g. a right angle) to the lines having portions forming letters A and B, then the imprint as viewed at an acute angle in a direction perpendicular to the last-mentioned lines will display only the letters A and B; but if the direction of view is changed so as to be perpendicular to the lines having portions forming letters C and D, then only those letters will appear at an acute angle of view.

The foregoing plural-image arrangements, described in simplified form, may be combined and modified to produce more complex and subtle transitory image effects. Thus, for instance, images displaying apparent animation or an illusion of motion may be provided, e.g. by employing arrangements of pattern elements that vary progressively and more or less continuously in depth over the image areas of the imprint.

The embodiment of Figs. 1—4 is shown as employing parallel lines of uniform width as the intaglio pattern elements forming both the latent image and background of the imprint. The lines, however, may depart from parallelism and may vary in width, for example to provide patterns visible e.g. from an angle of view normal to the imprinted substrate surface. Alternatively, other types of pattern elements may be employed, e.g. broken lines or rows of dots corresponding to the lines of Figs. 1—4 and having variation in depth to provide the latent image in the same manner as the lines shown in the drawing, or other arrangements, including random arrays, of pattern elements, wherein groups of adja-

cent pattern elements or portions thereof have relatively enhanced depth to cooperatively provide one or more latent images visible at a sufficiently acute angle of view in at least one plane normal to the substrate surface.

The transitory image of the imprint of Figs. 1—4 cannot be reproduced by photocopying or like two-dimensional copying techniques. If, for example, the imprint is photographically copied at an angle normal to the imprinted surface, the photographically formed reproduction will be simply a uniform pattern of parallel lines, in which the image will be substantially undetectable visually as it is when the original imprint is viewed from a normal angle of view, and will display no increase in contrast between image and background portions as the angle of view is changed. While the imprint might be photographed at an appropriate angle or with illumination incident at an acute angle so as to reproduce the image, nevertheless the image on a photocopied or other two-dimensional reproduction would again not vary in contrast with the background upon change in angle of view, because two-dimensional copying is incapable of reproducing the variations in line depth that provide the transitory character of the image. Consequently, the authentic intaglio imprint can readily be distinguished from a two-dimensional counterfeit by visually ascertaining whether the image (if any) varies in contrast with the background as the angle of view or angle of illumination is changed. Thus positive verification of a document bearing such imprint can be simply effected by relatively untrained personnel and without resort to auxiliary viewing devices.

Figs. 5—8

In these embodiments of the invention, a latent image is formed by substantially parallel intaglio lines extending at a substantial angle (e.g. about 30° or more) to substantially parallel intaglio lines (e.g. similar to the image-forming lines in spacing and depth) forming the background portion of an intaglio imprint. Stated in general, the contrast attainable between image and background increases with increasing angular divergence between the image-forming lines and the background-forming lines, i.e. other factors such as line depth and spacing and ink and background colors being the same; the greatest contrast, then, is realized as the difference in orientation between the image lines and the background lines approaches 90°. For simplicity of illustration, the embodiments of the invention now to be described are shown as having image-forming lines perpendicular to the background-forming lines, as a specific example of the formation of latent images by divergent orientation of image and background lines.

Referring to Fig. 5, there is shown an intaglio imprint 30 on a sheet of paper 31.

The imprint 30 comprises a centrally disposed maple-leaf image 32 formed of substantially parallel, closely spaced, raised and inked intaglio lines 33 extending in a direction substantially perpendicular to the long edge 34 of the paper. The imprint 30 further includes a background 36 (surrounding image 32) formed of substantially parallel, closely spaced, raised and inked intaglio lines 37 extending in a direction substantially parallel to the long edge of the paper, i.e. substantially perpendicular to the image-forming lines 33. The width and spacing of the background-forming lines 37 correspond to the width and spacing of the image-forming lines 33 so that the image and background portions of the imprint exhibit the same tone as seen from a normal angle of view; consequently, from that angle, the image is not readily distinguishable visually from the background.

In the imprint of Fig. 5, the lines of both the image and background portions are locally curved to provide variations in line spacing and thereby to form a pattern, visible from a normal angle of view, extending continuously through the latent image 32 and background 36. This visible pattern may be formed by lines of any orientation having appropriately located variations in spacing, since it is the arrangement of such variations (rather than the orientation of the line elements) that provides the visual effects cooperatively constituting the pattern; hence portions of the pattern may be defined by the background lines 37, and other portions of the same continuous pattern may be defined by the differently oriented image lines 33, without disrupting the continuity of the pattern. While the pattern may serve one or more of the usual purposes of a conventional visible intaglio pattern, e.g. conveying information or providing a decorative effect, it also aids in concealing the latent image 32 when the imprint 30 is viewed from a direction normal to the surface of paper 31.

Notwithstanding the local curvature of the image and background lines in the imprint 30, it will be appreciated that all the background lines extend substantially in the same direction, and all the image lines extend substantially in a direction perpendicular to the background lines. Because of this relative orientation of the image and background lines, the image 32 appears in perceptible contrast to the background 36 as the angle of view of the imprint becomes increasingly more acute. The relationship between image-background contrast and angle of view in the embodiment of Fig. 5 may be explained by reference to Figs. 6-8, wherein (for simplicity of illustration) the background and image lines are shown as rectilinear, i.e. with the pattern-forming curves and variations in spacing omitted. It will be understood that the local pattern-producing variations in the lines of

the Fig. 5 imprint do not significantly affect the image-background contrast at low angles of view.

As stated above, when viewed in a direction normal to the imprinted surface of paper 31, there is substantially no visually detectable contrast between the image 32 and background 36, because the line widths and spacings in the image and background portions are substantially the same; i.e. there is substantially the same ratio of ink-bearing area to visible "white space" (between lines) in the background as in the image. As viewed in a direction perpendicular to the background lines 37, the background 36 becomes darker with decreasing angle of view, owing to the fact that the raised and inked background lines 37 increasingly occlude the light or unprinted spaces between them as the angle of view becomes more acute. However, the defined direction of view (perpendicular to the background lines 37) is substantially aligned with the image lines 33; hence decrease in angle of view in this direction does not cause progressive occlusion of the light spaces between the lines of the image, but instead these light spaces remain fully visible even at very acute angles of view. As a result, at a sufficiently acute angle of view the image is very markedly lighter in appearance than the background, and stands out in clear contrast thereto, i.e. because the image remains relatively light in appearance while the background darkens progressively with decrease in angle of view.

Fig. 7 is an enlarged, schematic perspective view of adjacent image and background portions as they appear at an acute angle of view in a plane perpendicular to the paper edge 34 and to the background lines 37. This figure illustrates the occlusion of intervening light spaces in the background by the lines 37, and the containing visibility of the light spaces between the image lines 33, at this angle of view. Fig. 8 shows the image 32 and background 36 as they would appear to an eye at the position 39 looking toward the image in a plane perpendicular to paper edge 34, at an acute angle of view L.

A reverse effect is observed if the imprint 30 is viewed in a direction perpendicular to the image lines 33 (and thus aligned with the background lines 37); i.e. the image then becomes progressively darker in appearance as the angle of view becomes more acute, owing to occlusion of the light spaces in the image by the image lines, while the background remains relatively light, with the result that at a sufficiently acute angle of view the viewer sees a dark image standing out in contrast to a light background.

Contrast between image and background can also be perceived by using directional illumination of the image at an acute angle perpendicular to either the image lines or the background lines, for selective darkening of

the image or background portion by shadows cast by the raised lines in such portion.

It will thus be appreciated that the authenticity of an intaglio imprint incorporating a latent image of the type shown in Figs. 5—8 can readily be verified by tilting the paper bearing the imprint to change the angle of view, in a direction perpendicular to either edge of the paper, or alternatively by changing the angle of illumination of the imprint. In an authentic imprint, an image will appear, increasing in contrast with decrease in angle of view or illumination. Although a photographic copy of the imprint may be able to reproduce the lines forming the image, e.g. as they appear when viewed in a direction normal to the surface of the paper, the image in a photocopied or other two-dimensional counterfeit will be substantially undetectable visually and will not appear upon change in angle of view or illumination; i.e. it will not exhibit the change in contrast with the background because the photocopy cannot reproduce the transitory quality of the image, which is dependent on the three-dimensional character of intaglio printing.

Preferably, to facilitate detection, the transitory image is either a letter, a number, a combination of letters and/or numbers, or an easily recognizable symbol such as (in Figs. 5—8) a maple leaf, as the recognizable shape of the image may enhance the ease with which it is perceived.

Although the intaglio pattern elements shown in the embodiments of Figs. 5—8 are lines, other spaced and raised inked pattern elements may be used, such as (for example) discontinuous or broken lines or appropriately oriented rows of dots, in place of the lines. Also, while the surface of the paper should be in contrast with the ink of the intaglio pattern elements, the surface need not be white, but may be tinted and/or surface printed (e.g. in a light ink, when a dark intaglio ink is used, or a dark ink, when a light intaglio ink is used) with a ground pattern. As noted, the image lines or other pattern elements need not be oriented perpendicular to the background lines or other pattern elements; although the greatest contrast is achieved with such perpendicular orientation, usefully discernible contrast between image and background is achieved (at a sufficiently acute, properly oriented angle of view) when the difference in orientation between image and background lines is much less, e.g. as little as 30°.

Plural images, for example images visible at acute angles of view from respectively different directions of view, may be achieved by providing, in a single imprint, an appropriate plurality of image-forming and background-forming pattern element orientations. An example is described below with reference to Fig. 16. Further special effects may be produced by using continuously or progres-

sively changing line orientations, e.g. to provide a latent image that alters in appearance (from an acute angle of view) as the direction of view is changed. Moreover, the production of latent images by differing pattern element orientations may be combined with other image-producing arrangements (such as variation in pattern element depth) in accordance with the invention to provide still more complex transitory visual effects.

Typically, an intaglio-line imprint of the type illustrated in Figs. 5—8 may be made up of 100 or more lines to the inch. The contrast attainable between image and background is dependent on the angle of view, the depth of the individual lines, and the spacing between them. More specifically, the angle of view L (in a plane perpendicular to a paper or like surface and to an array of parallel intaglio lines printed thereon) at which the lines completely occlude the light spaces between them may be defined by the relation

$$L = \arctan \frac{a}{b} \quad (1)$$

wherein

a = line depth (embossment plus ink film), and
 b = width of light space between adjacent lines.

For a given number n of lines per inch, and a given ratio r of inked to uninked space per unit area of the imprint (a commonly used parameter in intaglio printing), again assuming the case of parallel intaglio lines of uniform width,

$$b = \frac{1}{n(r+1)} \quad (2)$$

Thus when n and r are known, the line depth (a) required to achieve complete occlusion of intervening spaces (and hence full visibility of a latent image) at a given angle of view L is

$$a = \frac{\tan L}{n(r+1)} \quad (3)$$

By way of specific example, for complete occlusion at a 5° angle of view, the ratio a/b (equal to $\tan 5^\circ$) must be .087; for complete occlusion at 12°, a/b must be .208; and for complete occlusion at 20°, a/b must be .364. In other words, for complete occlusion at a 12° angle of view the line depth must be about 1/5 the width of the light space between lines; thus for $n=50$ lines/inch and $r=1:1$, $b=0.01$ inch and the line depth (a) must be 0.002 inch, while for $n=200$ lines/inch and $r=1:1$, $b=0.0025$ inch and the requisite line depth is only 0.005 inch. The

foregoing examples illustrate the way in which line depth can be calculated to produce a desired latent or transient image effect in this and other embodiments of the invention.

5 As in the case of the embodiment of Figs. 1—4, the imprint of Figs. 5—8 may be formed on a sheet of paper or like substrate from a suitably engraved and inked intaglio plate in a single impression, using generally 10 conventional intaglio printing techniques. The engraved or etched pattern on the plate (i.e. incised into the otherwise smooth plate surface) has the same appearance as the imprint shown in Fig. 5 except that the lines 33 and 15 37 on the plate are grooves rather than raised embossments. In general, the grooves on the plate should be somewhat deeper than the desired line depth (i.e. height of line relief) on the imprint to be produced. As will be 20 understood by those skilled in the art, the depth of relief attained in an intaglio imprint for a given depth of engraving on a plate is dependent, *inter alia*, on the properties of the substrate being printed, such as the hardness of paper (when paper is used as the substrate); 25 in other words, the depth of engraving of the plate (to produce a desired line depth in the imprint) is determined with reference to the properties, such as hardness, of the substrate that is to be printed. When the plate is inked (with ink deposited in the engraved recesses of the plate, and wiped from the smooth plate surface), and the paper to be printed is 30 pressed against it, the image and background are simultaneously imprinted as raised, inked lines on a surface of the paper, the paper being deformed into the grooves of the engraving to form raised ridges and the ink from the groove being deposited on the ridges to produce the raised and inked intaglio imprint. 40 The plate may be engraved or etched, and the design of background lines (or other pattern elements) and substantially differently oriented image lines (or other pattern elements) to be engraved may be initially prepared, by known 45 techniques as will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

Figs. 9—11

50 The embodiment of the invention herein illustrated includes an intaglio imprint 40 (on a sheet of paper 41) which incorporates a latent image 42 similar to that of Figs. 5—8, i.e. formed of parallel intaglio lines 43 extending in a direction perpendicular to an array of 55 parallel intaglio lines 44 forming a background 45. However, in this embodiment both the image and background lines are substantially rectilinear. Local widening (shown at 46) and interruption (shown at 47) of both 60 image and background lines produces an overall pattern of ovals extending continuously through the image and background with ut hindering perception of the image (the word "TEN") in clear contrast to the background

when the imprint is viewed at a sufficiently 65 acute angle of view L in a plane perpendicular to one of the sets of parallel lines, e.g. perpendicular to the background-forming lines, as shown in Fig. 11. The pattern produced by 70 widenings 46 and interruptions 47 of the two sets of lines is visible when the imprint 40 is viewed at an angle normal to the surface of the paper 41, and aids in making the latent 75 image 42 substantially undetectable visually from that angle. Except for the way in which this pattern is formed, the embodiment of Figs. 9—11 is generally similar to that of Figs. 5—8.

Figs. 12—15

80 These figures show a way of forming a transient image in accordance with the present invention, i.e. an image that is visible when seen from a 90° angle of view but which disappears 85 when the angle of view becomes sufficiently acute.

In this embodiment, an intaglio imprint 50 on a sheet of paper 51 comprises a background 52 formed of parallel, spaced, raised and inked 90 intaglio lines 53 e.g. of uniform depth, and a transient image 54 (shown as an arrow) formed of further intaglio lines 55 parallel with and interposed between lines 53 of the background. The image-forming lines 55 are 95 substantially lesser in depth than the background-forming lines 53, as best seen in Figs. 14 and 15.

When the imprint 50 is seen from a normal angle of view (i.e. 90° with respect to the paper surface), the image 54 is clearly visible 100 in contrast to the background, because the visible image lines 55 darken the image portion of the imprint relative to the background portion wherein there are no printed lines in the light spaces between adjacent background 105 lines 53. However, at a sufficiently acute angle of view L (i.e. with a direction of view perpendicular to the background lines 53), the deeper background lines 53 completely 110 occlude the less deep image lines 55 as well as the light spaces between background lines, with the result that the image disappears and the imprint exhibits a more or less uniform dark tone. Fig. 13 illustrates the disappearance 115 of the image from the imprint 50 as seen by an eye in position 58 at an acute angle of view L, while Fig. 15 shows diagrammatically the occluding effect of the background lines as 120 seen along a line of sight 59 at angle L. This the transient character of the image may readily be perceived by tilting the paper 51 to change the angle of view. A photocopied or other two-dimensional counterfeit may reproduce the image lines 55 as well as the background lines 53, but will not exhibit this transient quality of the image because the photocopy cannot reproduce the requisite difference 125 in image and background line depth to achieve the transitory effect.

The angle of view θ at which the image disappears is dependent on the relative depths of the image and background lines as well as the spacing between adjacent background lines.

5 It is presently preferred to select these dimensions to provide complete occlusion of the image lines (and consequent disappearance of the image) at a viewing angle of between 5° and 20° .

10 The image and background portions of the imprint 50 may be formed on the paper 51 in a single impression from an intaglio plate having etched or engraved thereon an array of grooves respectively corresponding in depth and position to the background and image lines of the imprint. Such a plate will have the appearance of the imprint shown in Fig. 12, except that, of course, the plate has grooves where the imprint has raised ridges.

20 Again, as in the other embodiments of the invention described above, the image and background may be formed of pattern elements other than continuous parallel lines.

25 Figs. 16 to 20 inclusive illustrate the formation of plural images in accordance with the principles of the invention.

First referring to Fig. 16, a first latent image comprises the letters T, E and N and a second partially overlapping latent image comprises the numerals 1 and 0. The images are formed in a background line pattern shown arbitrarily as parallel, raised and spaced intaglio lines 61 printed on an appropriate substrate 60. The numerals 1 and 0 are formed as an intaglio imprint comprising, for non-overlapping areas 62, parallel, raised and spaced intaglio lines oriented in a direction diagonal to the background lines 61. The letters T, E and N are similarly formed as an intaglio imprint comprising, for non-overlapping areas 64, parallel, raised and spaced intaglio lines oriented in a direction perpendicular to the lines of areas 62, and again diagonal to the background lines 61.

45 The problem in creating the plural image arises in areas 66 which are areas common to both the numerals 1 and 0 and the letters T, E and N. These areas are comprised of raised and spaced parallel intaglio lines having an orientation intermediate the orientation of the lines in areas 62 and 64 respectively; thus the lines in areas 66 may, as shown, have an orientation perpendicular to the background lines 61. The lines in areas 62, 64 and 66 are intaglio-printed in the same way as has been described above with reference to Figs. 1 to 11.

Thus when a viewer views the pattern of Fig. 16 along a direction or viewing line perpendicular to the lines in image areas 62, at a small angle of view (i.e. angle to the plane of the substrate 60), the lines in areas 62 will merge together to form a clearly visible image of the greater part of the numerals 1 and 0.

65 Furthermore, since along the last-mentioned

viewing line there is some visual "compression" of the lines in areas 66, a visual merging effect will occur in these areas as well which, less pronounced than the merging of the lines in areas 62 along this viewing line, nevertheless is sufficient to afford the viewer visual continuity of the numerals 1 and 0.

Similarly, when the pattern is viewed along a direction of view perpendicular to the lines of areas 64 at a slight angle to the surface of the substrate 60, the letters T, E and N will be readily perceived by the viewer. Again the areas 64 comprised of raised intaglio printed lines oriented exactly perpendicularly to the line of viewing will give the most pronounced visual merging, but areas 66 will give sufficient visual merging to enable the viewer to see the letters T, E and N as continuously-formed discrete visual areas.

Fig. 16 thus illustrates the formation of plural latent images in accordance with the principles of the invention.

Fig. 17 illustrates schematically in greatly expanded view a pattern for the formation of plural transient images in accordance with the invention. The printed pattern comprises a first set of spaced and raised inked intaglio dots of a first height above the substrate level arranged in an appropriate array, for example a rectangular array, i.e. in vertical columns and horizontal rows as seen in Fig. 17. These dots are shown schematically as the large squares 70 in Fig. 17. Between these large dots 70 are intermediate spaced and raised inked intaglio dots of a lower height which are strategically placed in order to form transient images in two different viewing directions. A first set of intermediate dots 72 forming arbitrarily the letter T are individually aligned with the columns of larger dots 70. Another set of intermediate dots 74 forming arbitrarily the letter H are individually aligned with rows of the larger dots 70. When the pattern is viewed along direction Z at a slight angle to the plane of the pattern, dots 72 will be occluded by dots 70 and the viewer will not see the letter T. When the pattern is viewed along direction Y at a slight angle to the plane of the pattern, dots 74 will be occluded by dots 70 and the viewer will not see the letter H. However, when the pattern is viewed from a direction perpendicular to its plane, the proximity of components of each letter may create visual confusion at such angle. The "confusion" can, of course, be artistically arranged to have eye appeal in appropriate patterns.

It will be understood that the representation of Fig. 17 is schematic only in showing large and small squares to illustrate two different heights of the raised intaglio dots 70, 72 and 74, but in the interests of lucid description and having regard to the limitations of a two-dimensional presentation of the invention, this approach to description has

been adopted. Since Fig. 17 is schematic in nature, Figs. 18 and 19 may have been added to show, in expanded view, the cross section of a representative row and a representative column of the pattern components of Fig. 17. Fig. 17 is a cross section of row C and Fig. 19 a cross section of column B. It will be seen that the intermediate dots 74 (Fig. 18) and 72 (Fig. 19) have a height less than the height of the dots 70 forming the rectangular array. The dots 72 and 74 need not necessarily be smaller in surface area than the dots 70 but they should be small enough to be completely occluded by the appropriate dot 70 when viewed in that direction which makes the transient image disappear.

Fig. 20 illustrates in expanded view a variant of the plural transient image technique of Fig. 17. In Fig. 20, all the dots in the pattern are of the same size and all the same height. However, the orientation of selected dots has been chosen so that in one of two perpendicular directions one transient image tends to diminish in visual impact when the pattern is viewed at a slight angle to its plane and in the other of the two perpendicular directions, another transient image likewise tends to disappear, although both transient images appear, albeit in rather less obviously perceptible form, when the document is viewed perpendicularly to its plane. The transient visual effect of the plural images of Fig. 20 is less pronounced than that of the Fig. 17 technique.

In Fig. 20, a rectangular dot array comprised of individual raised and inked square intaglio dots 80 is arranged on the substrate (in vertical columns and horizontal rows) so that each dot 80 is separated from its nearest dot neighbors 80 by a horizontal and a vertical space equal to its width. A first set of additional dots 82 identical to dots 80 is arranged so that the dots 82 are aligned with columns of dots 80. The dots 82 form the letter A. A second set of dots 84 identical to dots 80 is individually oriented in line with rows of dots 80 to form the letter C. To distinguish the three sets of dots shown on the drawing from one another, the dots have been individually drawn as bearing three different types of surface pattern, according to the set to which they belong. However, it is to be understood that in the pattern as printed, the dots would be a solid color. Indeed, if the dots 80, 82, 84 are exactly uniform in area and the space between dots 80 is equal to or less than the width of a dot, the dots 82 and 84 will merge with dots 80 to form solid line patterns.

When the pattern of Fig. 20 is viewed in direction Z, at a slight angle to the pattern plane, there is visual merging of horizontal lines but not vertical lines, and thus the letter C formed by dots 84 becomes visually prominent while the letter A tends not to be per-

ceived. When the pattern is viewed in direction Y at a slight angle to the pattern plane, there is visual merging of vertical lines but not horizontal lines, and thus the letter A formed by dots 82 becomes visually prominent while the letter C tends not to be perceived. Viewed from a perpendicular direction, the pattern shows the combined set of vertical and horizontal lines forming the letters A and C in equal degree of visual impact.

While Figs. 16—20 have illustrated only two plural images and have thus made use of two dot or line orientations at 90° to one another, it will be apparent that more than two plural images can be created using line or dot orientations of smaller angular difference. For example, three plural images could be created using three orientations at angles differing by 60° from one another. In the 60° example, the overlapping areas of two latent images of Fig. 16 could be intaglio printed with raised and linked lines running at 30° to the orientation of each of the two non-overlapping raised and inked line areas of the two latent images.

Intaglio plates for printing the patterns of Figs. 16—20 may be created using similar dimensions, spacings, etc. as those previously described above.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A printed article suitable for use as a security document or the like having

(a) a recording medium having an intaglio-printable surface and

(b) an intaglio imprint of spaced and raised inked pattern elements on said surface, wherein

(c) said imprint includes at least one image and a background each formed by pattern elements of said imprint; and

(d) pattern elements in said one image differ from pattern elements in said background to produce variation in contrast between said one image and said background as the angle of view (as hereinbefore defined) of said imprint varies in at least one plane normal to said surface, the image and background pattern elements being respectively so arranged that said one image is substantially undetectable visually from one angle of view but appears in clear contrast to said background from another angle of view in said plane.

2. An article as defined in claim 1 wherein the ink is of a colour visibly contrasting with the surface of the recording medium on which it is printed.

3. An article as defined in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said pattern elements in said image differ in depth (as hereinbefore defined) from pattern elements in said background.

4. An article as defined in claim 3, wherein said pattern elements in both said image and said background are arranged to form spaced and raised substantially parallel lines.

5. An article as defined in claim 3, wherein said pattern elements in said image have substantially greater depth than the pattern elements in said background, for forming an image that is substantially undetectable visually when said imprint is seen at a first angle of view but appears in clear contrast to the background when seen at a second angle of view in said plane.
6. An article as defined in claim 3, wherein said image is formed by pattern elements disposed between adjacent pattern elements in said background, said pattern elements in said background being of substantially greater depth than said image-forming pattern elements, for concealing said image when said imprint is seen at an acute angle of view in said plane.
7. An article as defined in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said pattern elements in said background are arranged to form spaced and raised substantially parallel lines, and said pattern elements in said image are arranged to form spaced and raised substantially parallel lines extending at a substantial angle to the lines in said background, for providing increase in contrast between said image and said background with decrease in angle of view in a plane substantially perpendicular to either the image lines or the background lines.
8. An article as defined in claim 7, wherein the lines in said image are of substantially the same width and spacing as the lines in said background, so that said image is substantially undetectable visually from said background when said imprint is seen at a 90° angle of view.
9. An article as defined in claim 8, wherein the pattern elements in both said image and said background are shaped and disposed to define co-operatively with a pattern that extends continuously through said image and said background and is visible when said imprint is seen from a 90° angle of view.
10. An article as defined in claim 9, wherein said pattern is formed by local variation in spacing between adjacent lines.
11. An article as defined in claim 9, wherein said pattern is defined by local variations in width of said lines.
12. An article as defined in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said medium has at least one substantially rectilinear edge, and said one plane is perpendicular to said one edge.
13. An intaglio printing plate comprising;
 (a) a smooth surface for contact with a surface of a material to be printed and
 (b) a plurality of recesses capable of receiving ink in said plate for forming spaced and raised inked pattern elements of an intaglio imprint on said material surface wherein
 (c) said recesses include
 (i) recesses for forming pattern elements defining at least one image in said imprint and
 (ii) recesses for forming pattern elements defining a background in said imprint; and
 (d) the image-forming recesses differ from the background-forming recesses for producing corresponding differences between the image-forming pattern elements and the background-forming pattern elements in said imprint such that said one image varies in contrast with said background in said imprint in correspondence with variation in angle of view of said imprint in at least one plane normal to the material surface bearing the imprint, said recesses being further so arranged that said one image is substantially undetectable visually from one angle of view but appears in clear contrast to said background from another angle of view in said plane.
14. A plate as defined in claim 13, wherein the recesses for producing image-forming portions of the pattern elements are substantially deeper than recesses for producing background-forming portions of the pattern elements.
15. A plate as defined in claim 13, wherein the recesses for producing the image-forming pattern elements are interposed between and substantially less deep than recesses for producing background-forming pattern elements.
16. A plate as defined in claim 13, wherein said recesses are adapted to produce pattern elements forming spaced, substantially parallel lines in said imprint.
17. A plate as defined in claim 16, wherein the recesses for producing image-forming pattern elements are arranged to produce an array of substantially parallel image-defining lines and wherein the recesses for producing background-forming pattern elements are arranged to produce an array of substantially parallel background-defining lines oriented at a substantial angle to the image-defining lines.
18. A method for producing an image by intaglio printing on a surface of an intaglio-printable recording medium, comprising
 (a) imprinting, on the medium surface, an array of spaced and raised inked intaglio pattern elements co-operatively defining at least one image and
 (b) imprinting on said surface an array of spaced and raised inked intaglio pattern elements co-operatively defining an image-surrounding background, said background-defining elements differing from said image-defining elements for producing variation in contrast between said one image and said background as the angle of view of said imprint varies in at least one plane normal to said surface, said image-defining elements and said background-defining elements being respectively so arranged that said one image is substantially undetectable visually from one angle of view but appears in clear contrast to said background from another angle of view in said plane.
19. A method as claimed in claim 18 where-

in the ink is of a colour visibly contrasting with the surface of the recording medium on which it is printed.

- 5 20. A method according to claim 18 or 19, wherein the steps of imprinting said image-defining pattern elements and said background-defining pattern elements are performed simultaneously by pressing said medium against a printing plate having inked
10 recesses for producing both the image-defining elements and the background-defining elements.

21. An intaglio-printed article exhibiting a transitory visual effect, comprising

- 15 (a) a recording medium having an intaglio-printable surface;

(b) a surface-printed background forming a pattern of plural discrete colours on said surface; and

- 20 (c) an intaglio imprint of spaced, raised and inked pattern elements on said surface in superimposed relation to said background, said pattern elements being disposed to occlude selectively a particular colour of said background pattern when said imprint is seen
25 from an acute angle of view in at least one plane normal to said surface and to permit unobstructed visual perception of said particular colour when said imprint is viewed in a
30 direction normal to said surface, thereby to

produce change in apparent colour of said surface with change in angle of view in said plane.

22. An article as claimed in claim 21 wherein the ink is of a colour visibly contrasting with that of the surface of the recording medium on which it is printed. 35

23. An article suitable for use as a security document or the like, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings. 40

24. An intaglio printing plate substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

25. A method of producing a transitory image by intaglio printing, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings. 45

26. An article printing using a plate as claimed in any of claims 13—17 and 24. 50

27. An article printed using a method as claimed in claims 18 to 20 or 25.

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